



ASPIRATION

Intellectually and Developmentally Disabled Fatal Four

Definition — Aspiration occurs when food, saliva, fluid, stomach contents, or a foreign object go into the airway and/or lungs but the person can still breathe. Silent aspiration will not have any visible symptoms.

Why are individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities at a high risk?

- Poor/improper positioning
- Rapid eating, stuffing of food in the mouth, guzzling, gulping air
- Poor coordination of breathing and swallowing

Signs & Symptoms

- Frequent coughing
- Loss of interest in certain foods
- Fever and/or low temperature
- Shortness of breath
- Eating too fast
- Reoccurring pneumonia

Preventative Action Steps

- Ensure the individual is receiving the appropriate diet including when eating at a restaurant, (e.g. thickened liquids, pureed)
- Ensure medication is consistent with the diet
- Implement appropriate positioning during and after a meal
- Conduct a swallow study

